

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Coast Guard****33 CFR Part 155****46 CFR Parts 25, 27, and 32****[CGD 97-064]****RIN 2115-AF53****Towing Vessel Safety****AGENCY:** Coast Guard, DOT.**ACTION:** Notice of public meetings; and reopening of comment period.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard is reopening the comment period and holding two public meetings on its proposed rule to improve the safety of towing vessels and tank barges. The rule would require the installation of equipment to suppress fires on towing vessels and would strengthen current standards for anchoring or retrieving a drifting tank barge. The Coast Guard is responding to requests for public meetings and another comment period to receive additional views on the issues raised in the notice of proposed rulemaking published at 62 52057 on October 6, 1997.

DATES: Comments on the notice of proposed rulemaking must be received in or before May 11, 1998. The meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, will be held on March 23, 1998, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The meeting in Newport, Rhode Island, will be held on April 9, 1998, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m..

ADDRESSES: The St. Louis meeting will be held at the conference room accessible through entrances 2.308 and 2.206, Second Floor, Robert A. Young Federal Building, 1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, MO 63103. The Newport meeting will be held at the Naval Education & Training Center Newport, Perry Hall, Building 440, Meyerkord Avenue, Newport, RI 02841-1644. You may send written comments to the Executive Secretary, Marine Safety Council (G-LRA) [CGD 97-064], U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2 100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593-0001, or deliver them to room 3406 at the same address between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The telephone number is 202-267-1477.

The Executive Secretary maintains the public docket for this rulemaking. Comments will become part of this docket and will be available for inspection or copying at room 3406, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, between 9:30 a.m. and 2 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Mr. Robert Markle, Project Manager (Fire Protection), 202-267-1076; or Mr. Allen Penn, Project Manager (Emergency Control Systems), 202-267-2997, U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, 2 100 Second Street SW., Washington, DC 20593-0001.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Request for Comments**

The Coast Guard encourages interested persons to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written data, views, or arguments. Persons submitting comments should include their names and addresses, identify this rulemaking [CGD 97-064] and the specific section of the proposed rule to which each comment applies, and give the reasons for each comment. Please submit two copies of all comments and attachments in an unbound format, no larger than 8½ by 11 inches, suitable for copying and electronic filing. Persons wanting acknowledgment of receipt of comments should enclose stamped, self-addressed postcards or envelopes.

The Coast Guard will consider all comments received during the comment period. It may change the proposed rule in view of the comments.

Public Meeting

Attendance is open to the public. Persons who are hearing-impaired may request sign translation by asking the person under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** at least one week before the meeting. With advance notice, and as time permits, members of the public may make oral presentations during the meeting. Persons wishing to make oral presentations should notify the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT** no later than the day before the meeting. Written material may be submitted before, during, or after the meeting. Persons unable to attend the public meetings should submit written comments as explained previously under **ADDRESSES** and **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** by May 11, 1998.

Dated: February 23, 1998.

Joseph J. Angelo,

Director of Standards, Marine Safety and Environmental Protection.

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